

Book Reviews

H2O

By Howard Schatz

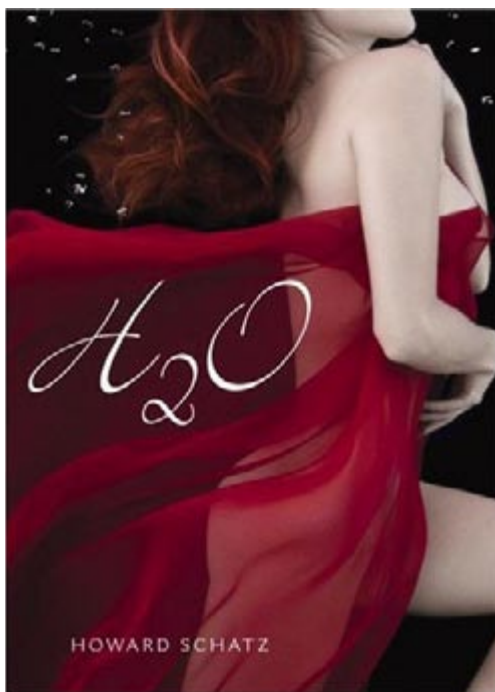
'H2O' is an extraordinary visual feast of images taken by this New York photographer and compiled into a beautifully printed 180 page 14" x 10.5" coffee table book.

The images are in the main taken underwater in a pool with precisely controlled lighting and physically articulate models to produce images of great beauty, richness and complicated simplicity.

In a strange sort of a way it is often what is left out that can contribute so much to an image and I began to realise that most of my favourite ones in this book were those where there seemed to be no water! The background was jet black and the model weightlessly suspended, adorned by diffused, pastel chiffon. A combination of great elegance.

The introduction by Owen Edwards is precisely informative and provides an experienced insight into the photographer and his wife and business partner Beverly J. Ornstein. Together they have worked with the medium, used its reflections and lit its depths to great effect in what are, for the most part, personal projects. The

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Cirque du Soleil section, however, was a commercial assignment which combines everything magical about the troupe themselves and Schatz's photographic talent and for me this was the highlight of the book.

The teamwork required is reflected in the Acknowledgements section and goes to prove that beautiful simplicity takes many talents to pull it off. Water has never looked so good.

H2O is published by Bullfinch Press and costs \$60.

www.howardschatz.com

American Waters

By Alex Kirkbride

I was very pleased to learn that Alex had been brought up in England where, I have no doubt, English eccentricity must have rubbed off on him and to prove it, I offer you this book.

'American Waters' works on so many levels glued together by water. Part road trip and part dive trip yet a very personal and at times splendidly silly (cows from their water tank, New York cabs from a blocked drain?!) journey.

The basic premise was to visit every US state and report photographically on the nation's water both salt and fresh. This was achieved over a 3 year period covering 50 states based in a classically American Airstream motor home pulled by equally American SUV. The combo was 55 feet long!

Many well thought out projects don't achieve their goal but this one keeps on track and produces a range of images which are both straightforward and surreal (a



AMERICAN WATERS

ALEX KIRKBRIDE

foreword by Jean-Michel Cousteau

cranberry bog?!). On the way we learn of the people and their landscapes, see natural and unnatural subjects and all photographed from a watery perspective.

The result is a book which is far from ordinary and the author has gone that extra mile to capture the extraordinary in a gloriously informative way.

'American Waters' is published by David and Charles.

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